



Informational Handbook for Friends and Family of a Person Incarcerated in a Vermont Correctional Facility

March, 2017

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Agency of Human Services

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To the Friends and Family of an Incarcerated Person:

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) recognizes this as a difficult and stressful time in your life. Your loved one's incarceration has resulted in many changes to their life as well as your own. The following Informational Handbook for Friends and Family of a Person Incarcerated in a Vermont Correctional Facility is a helpful resource in understanding more about the Vermont correctional facility system and aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

The DOC is dedicated to the care and safety of your loved one while they are in our custody. We are committed to answering your questions and concerns surrounding your loved one and their incarceration. Please do not hesitate to reach out either to your loved one's caseworker or directly to the Commissioner's Office at 802-241-2442 with your questions or concerns. Together we hope to build a partnership that will result in the successful reentry of your loved one and the safety of all persons.

Sincerely,



Lisa Menard,
Commissioner



Introduction



If you are a friend or family member of a person incarcerated in a Vermont correctional facility, your life has changed in many ways. Incarceration is often a difficult time not only for the inmates, but also for their family and friends. Separation from a loved one due to incarceration can be emotionally, spiritually, and economically overwhelming. In addition, your relationship with the inmate has changed. You, as the contact, will be subject to the rules of the Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC). The incarcerated person loses choices about when he or she can make phone calls or have visits. This can be hard for the person outside who has to make changes in his or her life in order to maintain the relationship.

This handbook will help you understand more about the Vermont correctional facility system. Although this handbook may not answer all of your questions, it will provide general information about the Vermont correctional facility system to hopefully assist you during this difficult time. It is important to know that this handbook is for informational purposes only, and the procedures, policies, rules, and regulations are subject to change. It is important to remember that if there are changes to the Department of Corrections' rules or state laws, those changes overrule this handbook. It is also important to know that rules can vary between correctional facilities. It is the Vermont DOC's goal that this handbook will provide support to you and give you a general understanding of the correctional facility system. We encourage you to maintain regular contact with your relative or friend who is in a correctional facility so you may be able to provide emotional support and stay informed of his or her progress.

Security

The DOC strives to maintain the safety and security of the persons under our care, and the public, as well as the safety of our staff, contractors and volunteers. DOC also recognizes that as a friend or family member the policies and procedures that govern safe correctional operations may be confusing or even seem irrational at times. While it is not possible to outline all of the details related to why we do what we do, or why we don't do something, we hope to provide some basic information that you will find useful.



Most people who come into corrections custody follow the rules. However, there are some that try to introduce contraband (drugs, tobacco, weapons and other forbidden items) into the facility. Some have even contacted or tried to contact their victims, or attempted to conduct criminal activities in the community or within the facility. These behaviors put inmates and staff at risk. For these reasons, DOC has developed policies and procedures to ensure the safety of the incarcerated population, staff, contractors and volunteers, and to promote public safety. If you have questions or concerns about specific rules or procedures, please feel free to contact the Superintendent of the facility to learn more.

What is Contraband?

To maintain safety and security the DOC restricts items allowed within correctional facilities. Items not allowed within a correctional facility are considered contraband.

Contraband includes:

- Any item not allowed when entering the facility, not given or assigned to an inmate by the DOC, or not bought from commissary.
- Any item changed from its original condition.
- Any item that a corrections officer believes impacts the safe and effective operation of the facility.
- The portion of items that exceed the allowable amounts of that particular item or stored by the inmate in an unauthorized manner.
- Any item received or sent through the mail that is not approved by the facility.
- Any item that is not within the [property matrix](#), or otherwise approved: such as, but not limited to:
 - Money
 - Items used for gambling
 - Books, magazines, or newspapers that are not approved
 - Clothes that are not approved
 - Handcuffs or other items used for restraining, including keys
- Property that is used to cover sprinkler heads, lights, vents, windows, or safety/security equipment is considered contraband.

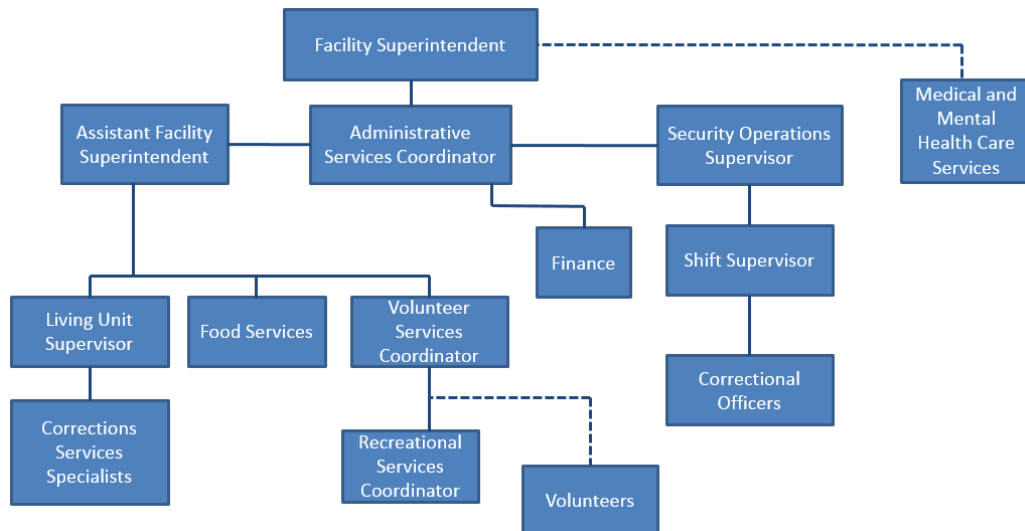
An inmate is not allowed to loan, trade, sell, give, or transfer property to another inmate. Property transferred in violation of this policy is considered contraband and will be taken.

If an inmate is found with tobacco products, prohibited substances, paraphernalia or similar products, they will be charged with a [major disciplinary offense](#) and possibly criminal charges.

Items that are generally forbidden in Vermont facilities include: cell phones, cash, keys or any metal items, chewing gum, containers that are not clear, credit cards, cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. Some facilities also prohibit items that can be used to make weapons or tattoo guns such as batteries, paper clips, ink pens with a spring, and others. When in doubt, always ask security if what you are bringing into the facility is approved.

Typical Facility Staff Organization

Each facility has a chain of command for corrections staff. The chain of command provides structural hierarchy within the facility. The chart below shows the typical organization of a correctional facility in Vermont. A facility Superintendent has the highest level of authority in the facility.



Booking and Intake

Your loved one entered a correctional facility through the booking process. During the booking process, the following took place:

- Inmates are fingerprinted, photographed and given an identification card.
- Personal property is inventoried and placed into storage for 30 days. Unapproved personal property can be picked up by a family member or friend. Unclaimed property is removed after the 30-day period. For more information, please follow this [link](#).
- Money is put into the inmate's account, which is available for withdrawals and deposits.
- Inmates are questioned about their general and mental health, substance use, and thoughts of hurting themselves.
- Medications are verified, and each inmate is given information about access to medical and mental health care. They can let staff know about any acute or chronic conditions they may have.
- Inmates are then assigned to a living unit and a Corrections Service Specialist; otherwise known as a caseworker.
- The booking officer at the time of an inmate's intake will search all their property and their body for contraband. They can bring in only approved items into the correctional facility.

How You Can Help

- Pick up unapproved personal property or excess approved property.
- Encourage your friend or family member to answer questions honestly.
- Before coming to a correctional facility, help make a list of all prescribed medications, the name and phone number of the prescribing doctor, and the name and number of the pharmacy where the prescriptions have

been filled within the last 30 days.

- Tell your friend or family member not to bring in medications.
- Contact Victim's Services at (802) 241-2338 if you are also a victim of your loved one's crime.
- Locating the inmate's birth certificate or proof of citizenship and storing it in a safe location. Proof of citizenship may be needed if the inmate must go to the hospital.
- Make a list of contacts and phone numbers of people that are important to the inmate.


Intake

After booking, inmates go through a screening process called intake.

Housing

Upon entering a correctional facility from the community, transports, or transfers, inmates are housed in Booking for intake and assessments given by DOC, medical, and mental health. The inmate's housing placement within the facility is determined by the assessments. Inmates will be housed in the least restrictive environment; while providing safety, security, and meeting the individual's medical or mental health needs.

Intake package: Every intake package will have inmate uniforms, 2 blankets, 2 towels, 2 sheets, 1 laundry bag. The facility will provide clothing and hygiene items to inmates who cannot afford to buy their own so that all inmates have the minimum basic items needed.



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Health Services

A health services screen will be performed by qualified health care professional. It is important that inmates tell medical staff of any medical, mental health or dental problem they may have. Inmates will be given a Tuberculosis Test at the time of admission.

Inmates are asked questions about all medical, dental and mental health conditions.

information is kept confidential and becomes a part of an inmate's medical record. The medical and mental health intake process is required.



a

All

Caseworker Assignment

Upon arrival at the correctional facility, inmates are assigned a Facility Corrections Service Specialist, commonly known as a caseworker. Their caseworker will meet with them within 5 business days to complete a facility orientation.

The caseworker will be the inmate's point of contact for many things, including updating phone sheets and visiting logs.

Basic Necessities

Inmates will be given an intake package which contains inmate uniforms, 2 blankets, 2 towels, 2 sheets, 1 laundry bag.

Inmate Personal Property

An inmate's property is kept at their own risk. The DOC is not responsible for any property personally retained by the inmate, which is lost, stolen, damaged, consumed, or discarded while in the inmate's possession. All inmates store their personal property in their rooms or assigned areas. Inmates are responsible for the care and safekeeping of property in their room or assigned area. Local rules on property storage may vary depending on the facility.

What can an Inmate bring in from Outside?

An inmate can bring few personal items into the facility with them. Inmates must complete a *Release of Liability/Declaration of Valuable Property form* for personal property items brought into the facility.

An inmate cannot keep cash or money in any form, a driver's license, credit or debit cards, a social security card, or other valuable documents while incarcerated.

At booking, no food and hygiene items may be kept by the inmate unless the inmate is transferring between facilities and:

- The food items were purchased at another Vermont correctional facility and they remained unopened and sealed;
- Hygiene items were purchased through the commissary at another Vermont facility and are in good condition and able to be searched.

Jewelry

Most jewelry is not allowed inside of a facility, with few exceptions. Inmates can keep the following types of jewelry:

- Wedding band – Plain metal or other material with no gemstone or imitation gemstones
- Watch
- Religious necklace(s) or medallion(s)

All jewelry is searched at the time of admission to a facility. This prohibition includes jewelry that is part of a body piercing.

- Jewelry allowed in the facility must be declared on the *Release of Liability/Declaration of Valuable Property form*.

- Jewelry not kept by an inmate will be mailed to or picked up by an individual named by the inmate. Any items not kept by the inmate will be mailed out at the inmate's expense or must be picked up within 30 calendar days.

Health Care Appliances

All health care appliances, including prostheses, dentures, eyeglasses or other durable medical equipment will be screened by Corrections health staff for approval and inclusion on the inmate's property inventory. Health staff, as appropriate, will help Corrections security staff person in searching all health items before an inmate receives them. All health care appliances will be logged in by medical staff and are periodically checked.

Religious Property

Inmates can have religious property as listed in the [Religious Property Allowances Appendix](#). Only items listed in the Appendix or otherwise approved through a religious accommodations request are allowed. These items are reviewed for safety and security. Once approved, all religious property allowed for an inmate becomes part of an inmate's personal property.

Personal Photographs

Photographs are important ties to the community and photos may be displayed in an inmate's room or assigned space based on facility rules. Photographs that are not allowed are nudes, sexually explicit, or polaroid-type photos.

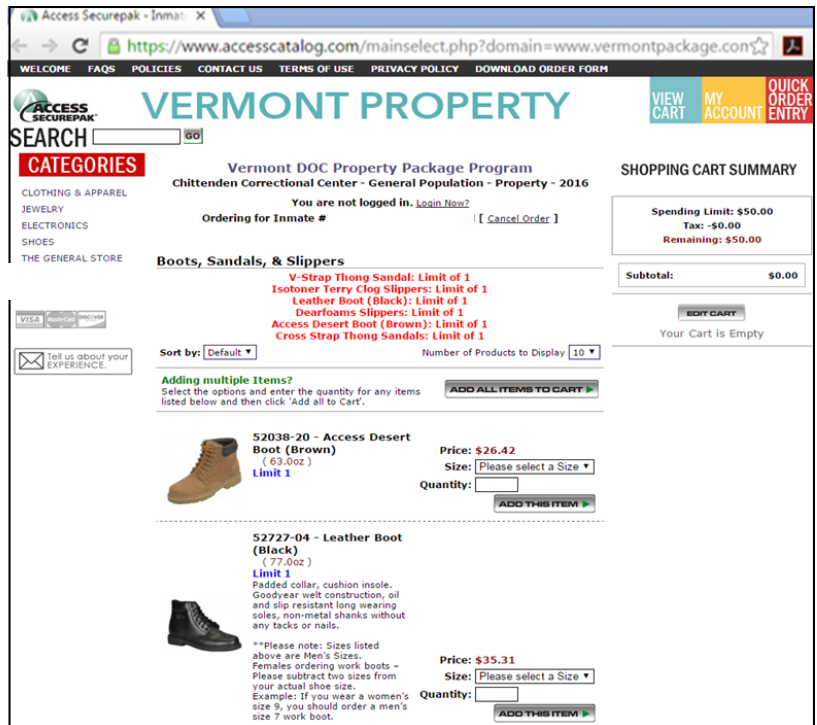
What is provided in the Facility?

Upon admission, each inmate, depending on need and available resources, is given certain items. State-issued items, except for facility-issued uniforms and bedding, are provided on an as-needed basis. Most inmates are responsible for buying their own items. The facility will provide clothing and hygiene items to inmates who cannot afford to buy their own so that all inmates have the minimum basic items needed.

Commissary

Commissary is an online storefront that the DOC contracts with to provide inmates with products such as hygiene items, snacks, clothing, stationary items, etc. Inmates can order items from the commissary using funds from their inmate account. Additionally, friends and family members can buy items for an inmate through the commissary's website available [here](#).

Friends and family can place money in an inmate's account that the inmate can then use to buy items from commissary. How to place funds in an inmate account is available on the DOC's website in the [Information for Inmate Families and Friends section](#).



Inmate Healthcare

Comprehensive healthcare services are provided by a private company that specializes in healthcare, including medical, mental health, dental, eyecare, and specialty services. At booking, all inmates receive an Initial Healthcare Receiving Screening, completed by a qualified health care professional (QHCP). Typically, inmates will receive a Comprehensive Health Assessment, completed by a provider, within 7 days of intake unless the last physical was completed within a reasonable timeframe. The health services team will develop a multi-disciplinary plan of care with the patient for all identified conditions. While incarcerated, inmates



may access healthcare services by filling out a “Healthcare Request Form” (aka, “Sick Slip”). If an inmate needs help filling out the form, a member of the health care team or DOC staff can help them. A nurse triages all requests, and if the request indicates a clinical symptom, a nurse will see the patient, generally within 48-72 hours. Referrals to providers will be completed as clinically indicated. How soon the provider sees the inmate depends on the urgency of the problem. Routine problems are generally seen within 14 days. In an emergency, inmates are seen immediately. Inmates should report an emergency to the officer for assistance, no sick slip is required. QHCPs are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Inmate Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Inmates receive a mental health screening as part of the “Initial Healthcare Receiving Screening” completed at booking. Because each patient handles incarceration differently, it is important to have all patients give a complete history and to tell staff of any real concerns they have. This includes any thoughts of self-harm, recent traumatic events, and historical or current suicidal thoughts. The DOC provides monitoring and treatment for inmates experiencing detox. Mental health staff offer support and treatment to individuals who have mental health and substance abuse disorders. Inmates may be counseled individually, in groups, receive psychotropic medications, or some combination of these interventions. Mental health and substance abuse treatment is part of the multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, individualized treatment plan. As with any health services, inmates may submit a “Sick Slip” to see a member of the mental health team. Correctional officers or another qualified health professional may also make a referral. Emergency mental health consultation is available on-site or over the phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Confidentiality

Most everything an inmate-patient shares with a member of the health care team is confidential. All health care staff follow federal requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

If you have questions about your loved one’s health there are several steps to take:

1. Ask the inmate to sign a DOC Release of Information to allow his/her caseworker to speak with you.
2. Contact the assigned caseworker with specific questions which the caseworker will talk to medical or mental health.
3. If this is unsuccessful, you may contact the Health Services Division of the Department of Corrections at (802) 241-0025 who can assist with completing a Release of Information.

How you can help?

Encourage good health habits and cooperation with the health care team. Communicate directly with the caseworker for concerns and questions.

Suicide Prevention

Who is at risk of suicide?

Whether a first-time or repeat inmate, inmates may be vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and actions. All inmates are carefully watched. Correctional officers know the risk factors which may include: history of mental health issues, substance abuse disorders, social adjustment problems, a serious illness, a recent loss of a loved one, divorce, separation, or a personal or family history of suicide attempts and are trained to recognize and report warning signs of suicidal behavior so that mental health professionals can respond.

How does the Department of Corrections try to reduce the risk of suicide?

Training in suicide prevention is one of the core competencies for correctional officers.

These trained correctional officers screen each newly arrived inmate for mental health issues, thoughts of suicide and other signs of distress. A qualified health care professional will also meet with inmates at intake to further assess any ideations of self-harm. We pay particular attention to those in high-risk categories.

What are some of the warning signs?

- Change in usual mood or personality such as nervousness, outbursts of anger, impulsive or reckless behavior, or apathy about appearance or health
- Change in attention span
- Recent loss such as a divorce or death
- Recent change in medication or substance use
- Change in sleep habits
- Change in diet, weight loss or gain
- Previous suicide attempts
- Talking about death or dying
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Giving away prized possessions, making a will or other final arrangements
- Telling you secrets or confessing
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Saying goodbye to you and others
- Talking about how bad they are or have been
- Feeling hopeless; sadness
- Frequent irritability or unexplained crying

How Can You Help?

- If you see any warning signs or if an inmate tells you something about self-harm or suicide, it is very important that this is reported immediately by calling the facility where your loved one is housed. Phone numbers to each facility can be found here (click on the yellow star to access the contact information about that facility): [Facility Phone Numbers](#).
- Encourage your loved one to exercise, take part in programming, education, employment and vocational opportunities, and reentry planning.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't inmates take the same medications that they are used to taking?

Usually, medications will be verified and continued in the facility. They may be the generic equivalent or in a different form. All medications are ordered based on the provider's review of the clinical presentation of the patient's symptoms. Some medications are not appropriate for use in the facilities and will not be ordered. Some factors that can influence this are urine drug screen results, medications not available as requested, a history of diverting medications, or being under the influence of drugs and or alcohol.

How does an inmate get to see a dentist or have their eyes checked?

An inmate puts in a sick call slip to see the dentist or optometrists, both of whom see inmates regularly. Glasses are available for inmates who need them.

Can family go with an inmate to see a doctor on the outside?

Due to security reasons, family members may not accompany an inmate to any planned doctor visits. In emergency or life threatening situations, you may ask the facility Superintendent for permission to visit your loved one in the hospital.

In general, appointment dates and times are not shared with the patient and if it is discovered that the patient found out when his or her appointment was to take place, it may be changed or cancelled. This is a security risk so it is best not to ask when an outside appointment is to occur.

How can a spouse find out about medical treatment while their partner is incarcerated?

The best person to ask is the inmate. If the inmate wishes, she or he can also sign a release of information allowing the family to have access to medical information. Without a signed release, DOC and health services staff cannot share protected health information with you.

What if an inmate refuses to take their medication?

An inmate can refuse any medical treatment. If an inmate repeatedly refuses a medication, s/he is asked to talk with the nurse and doctor about how it could affect their health. Continued refusal of medications or other medical interventions may result in hospitalization.

Does the facility-based health care provider continue to write orders for medication and care after an inmate is released?

No. When they are released, all inmates receive a discharge health summary. This summary includes all the current information about their medications and treatments. Patients can pick up several days' worth of their prescribed medications from a designated pharmacy and will be given assistance in signing up for health insurance (including Medicaid) by their caseworker if needed. Inmates are instructed to take their discharge health summary to the doctor of their choice.

Staying in Touch

Nothing compares to seeing your loved one in person. Visiting them at their correctional facility, however, can often be difficult. The correctional facility may be far away and sometimes there's just no way to be there in person.

Telephone calls, email, and video visit services are available at all Vermont correctional facilities.



Telephone

The telephone can provide inmates with a valuable means of communicating with family and friends as well as attorneys, courts and other social agencies. Inmates' access to the telephone is provided in a manner which takes into the account the security needs of correctional facilities and protection of victims of crime and the public. All calls are recorded.



Each inmate is provided with an individual account needed for making telephone calls. DOC will not pay for telephone calls. However, in an emergency the facility may pay for a call by an inmate if the inmate cannot arrange to pay for it.

Incoming legal calls will be transferred through an attorney phone between the hours of 8 AM—10 PM at no cost to the inmate or family/friend.

Do phone calls from a correctional facility cost money?

Yes. Inmates can place collect phone calls or buy a phone card. A collect phone call will charge the recipient of the phone call, and the phone card is pre-paid by the inmate.

Call rates change regularly. See the link for current rates: [Current Phone Call Rates](#). Rates for phone calls are, in part, governed and guided by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC): [FCC Inmate Telephone Guidelines](#).

Can I call an inmate?

No. An inmate can only make calls during specific times that are allotted for them to do so. If you call a facility, you will not be allowed to speak with your loved one. If there is an emergency, you can contact the facility where your loved one is located, and speak with the shift supervisor.

How do I get on the approved contact call list?

The inmate is required to submit the names and phone numbers of the people they want to talk on the phone with. These requests should go to their assigned Caseworker for approval. Each inmate may have up to 10 phone numbers approved at any one time.

Are phone conversations monitored?

Yes, phone calls are recorded and may be listened to by staff. As with visits and mail, communication that inmates have with individuals outside of the correctional facility is monitored for security purposes. Three-way phone calls (a call where the outside party introduces another party to the call) or forwarding a call when on the phone with an inmate are not allowed. Violations of phone use rules may result in the loss of phone privileges for a period of time.

In case of emergency

If there is a death or serious illness or injury in an Inmate's family, you can call the facility where the inmate is and request to speak with the shift supervisor.

Signing up for Email and Video Visits

JPay is a private company that partners with state, county and federal correctional facilities across the country to provide safe, reliable and convenient services for family and friends of inmates. Additional information regarding JPay for Inmate family and friends is available on the [DOC's website](#).

Before communicating with your loved one, you must first register with JPay. Go to www.jpay.com to sign up and start connecting.

Video Visits

JPay's Video Visitation lets you talk face-to face with your incarcerated friend or relative from the comfort of your home. Video Visits let you connect with your inmate in real time. To use the service, you must first schedule a visitation and have it approved by your loved one's facility, a process made easier with the calendar function on JPay.com.

All you need for a Video Visit is a webcam, microphone, speakers and a computer with the appropriate capabilities. JPay's system will take you step-by-step through the process of setting up a successful Video Visit, so that you can be there for your loved one, even when you're not physically there.



Video Visitation Fees	
Video	Fee
30 Min	\$9.95

Email

Email offers speed and convenience for staying in touch with your loved one.

JPay email allows inmates to receive email messages from friends and family. JPay's correctional email service is faster than regular mail, with inmates usually receiving emails within 48 hours. Each email requires a "stamp," that can be purchased online and at JPay kiosks in the correctional facility. Inmates are able to respond electronically, view and request to print your message, and view photo attachments.

Prices as of January, 2016

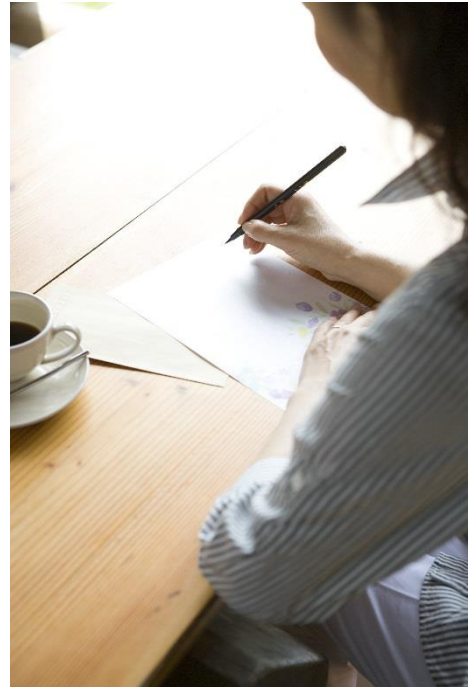
Item	Fee
JP5 Mini Tablet – 16 GB	\$59.99
JP5 Tablet – 32GB	\$119.99
Song	\$1.29 - \$1.99
Stamp	\$0.40 (per stamp)*
Email	1 stamp (per page)

Item	Fee
Photo Attachment	1 stamp
E-Card	1 stamp
VideoGram	3 stamps
Video Visitation (30 Minute Session)	\$9.95
eBook	\$0.99 - \$25.00

Email, Video and Photo Attachment Rules

Emails, videos and photo attachments that contain any of the following will not be delivered and stamps will not be refunded. Anyone sending or receiving emails, videos or photos that violate these policies may lose their privileges to utilize such services.

- Illegal acts, including but not limited to displaying drugs, weapons, abuse to animals or children
- Anything of a threatening nature
- Anything sexual in nature, including nudity, sexual gestures or sexual "adult toys"
- Showing of cleavage or the midsection
- Tube/tank/spaghetti string dresses, tops, shirts; sleeveless shirts/tops; muscle shirts; beach wear; or transparent clothing
- High cut shirts, shorts, skirts or dresses
- Gang signs or gang related clothing
- Information for another inmate
- Attachments with coded messages
- Information that encourages violence



Mail

Exchanging letters through the mail is a vital, and less expensive, way of staying in touch. You may not send packages or gifts, only correspondence. As long as you meet the inmate mail regulations (see below), you can include school work, newsletters, progress reports, photos or pictures a child has drawn.

Prohibited Items for Mail (not a complete list):

No packages or gifts. No glitter, glue, stickers, labels, staples, tape, string, clips, gel pens, colored markers or crayons; no stamps or empty envelopes; no colored copies from computer printers or copy machines (photos have to be actual prints from a photo kiosk, not computer generated); no musical or plastic greeting cards. All mail must include complete return address with the full first and last name of sender, no initials.

If you have a question about whether something will meet the requirements, you can call the specific correctional facility, and ask for the person who supervises mail.

Visiting

Visiting in correctional facilities is an important part of keeping your loved one connected with family and friends during the incarceration. The DOC recognizes that visiting is an avenue to maintain healthy family relationships, but also views personal visits as a privilege. During visits, staff will be focused on maintaining order and security in the facility. For this reason, it is important to know the visiting rules and follow them. Knowing what is expected of you and your loved one will allow you to feel as comfortable as possible, focus on your relationships and make the most of each visit.



Who Can Visit?

You may be approved to visit with an inmate provided that:

1. You are on the inmate's approved visiting list.

Inmates are allowed to have 10 people on their visiting list. Changes to an inmate's visitor list may only be made every 90 days.

2. You have a government-issued (state or federal) photo identification card (e.g., driver's license, passport, etc.)
3. If you are a minor (under the age of 18), you must be accompanied by your legal guardian, or an adult who has written permission of the guardian, and is on the inmate's approved visitor list.
4. You are not the victim of the inmate's crime, unless you have received victim permission to visit from the Victim Services staff. Only victims may request to visit the inmate of their offense; inmates may not put their victims on their visiting list.

5. Your contact has not been prohibited by court order, by probation order or conditions of required DOC programming.
6. If you are under supervision with the DOC, you must have the written approval of your assigned Probation or Parole Officer and the Superintendent of the facility;
7. You are not a current employee or contractor of the DOC;
 - a. DOC Employees who have an incarcerated relative may be approved for visits by the facility Superintendent.
 - b. If you are a former employee or contractor of the DOC, you must have the permission of the facility Superintendent.

Visitors must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If you are, you will be refused admittance.

What Should I Wear for a Visit?

The DOC has a dress code for all visitors, so be sure to wear clothing that is appropriate for a correctional facility.

The dress code is in place to maintain order in the facility and to ensure that contraband is not being passed between an inmate and a visitor. Clothing that is too revealing is not acceptable, as well as garments such as hats, sunglasses, hooded sweatshirts and jackets. The facility staff has the authority to determine what acceptable visiting attire is, and their decision is final. If your visit is refused because of what you are wearing, you will be able to leave the facility to change and return to the facility without penalty. Please keep the following guidelines in mind when choosing what you wear to a visit to eliminate any problems.

Visitors cannot wear:

- Clothes with holes, rips or tears
- Sweat suits
- Hooded sweatshirts
- V-neck shirts
- Low-cut shirts or shorts
- See through clothing
- Tank tops or halters
- Anything provocative
- Open toe shoes
- Flip flops or sandals
- Hats, headbands and hair clips*
- Tight fitting clothes
- Shirts with offensive sayings or pictures.
- Skirts or shorts must be no higher than 2 inches above knee level when standing.
- Shoulders and stomach must be covered.
- Clothes must cover all inflammatory tattoos.
- Any clothing that resembles a correctional officer uniform or any law enforcement uniform will not be allowed.
- Outer garments such as coats, gloves and jackets are not permitted into the visiting room but may be placed in a locker during the visit.

** If headwear is a religious item and approved by the Superintendent, it may be allowed but is subject to search.*

Exceptions: Children 10 years old and younger may be allowed to visit if wearing shorts, skirts and/or dresses shorter than mid-thigh, rompers, sleeveless shirts, etc. The discretion of the staff person registering the visitor will prevail.

To ensure the order, safety, and security visitors must comply with the dress code. Failure to abide by the dress code may result in the refusal of visits.

What Can I Bring with Me to My Visit?

No children or pets will be left unattended in any vehicle on state property.

You cannot bring anything into the visiting room without permission from the facility Superintendent or designee.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tobacco or tobacco products
- Purse
- Money
- Jewelry
- Cell phone
- Photographs
- Papers
- Food
- Drinks
- Cameras
- Other electronic devices



All items authorized by the Superintendent or designee to enter the facility will be searched upon entering and exiting the visiting room.

Tools that can be used in aiding escape are not allowed on the property, even if you leave it in your car.

Pharmaceuticals that are not prescribed by a physician to the visitor and not in their original container are not allowed on the property. If you have a serious medical condition that requires medication or devices on hand, please contact the facility ahead of your visit.

Visitors will be offered a locker or secure area to put any personal property (such as car keys, jackets, hats, gloves, money, belts, purses and hair clips) during the visit. Cigarettes and lighters should be secured in the visitor's vehicle.

DOC assumes no responsibility for items lost or stolen.

No inmate property or funds will be accepted by facility staff during a visit.

All visitors and vehicles are subject to search by DOC staff. Bringing weapons, drugs or alcohol on to the property is a crime punishable by imprisonment, fine or both. Violators will be prosecuted.

When You Arrive at the Facility...

When you arrive at the facility, there are a few steps before your visit can begin.

1. Sign In

Report to the facility's visiting reception desk on the scheduled visiting day and sign the Visitor Registration Log.

2. Show Photo ID

Present your photo ID to the correctional officer on duty. The officer will ensure that your name appears on the Inmate Visitor List. All visitors must be named on the approved visitor list for the individual with whom they are attempting to visit.

These are the only forms of ID that will be allowed:

- Valid driver's license
- Valid state photo ID card from state of residence
- Valid photo military ID card (active duty only)
- Valid passport
- Valid tribal ID card

The name and address on the photo ID must prove that you are the person on the approved visitor list. If there is a difference in the name or address, you must satisfactorily explain it.

For Minors under the age of 16: A birth certificate is required. Visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult who is their legal guardian, or have written permission of the legal guardian to bring the minor into a correctional facility to visit the inmate.

If the inmate you are trying to visit has been convicted of a crime involving the abuse of a child, they may not receive a visit from a minor without the approval of the Superintendent.

3. Walk Through Metal Detector

You will have to walk through a metal detector before being you can enter the visiting room.

If you fail to successfully clear the walk-through metal detector, you will be given the opportunity to submit to a search with a hand-held metal detector. If the hand-held metal detector is activated, you will be asked to leave the facility.

Exception: If you have a metal implant, prosthetic or pacemaker and cannot clear the metal detector or hand-held scanner, a doctor's note is needed and a pat search will be conducted.



- ### 4. K9 (dog) searches:
- You should expect that drug detection K9's, supervised by the Vermont State Police, to be at the facilities during visiting hours. You may be inspected by these K9's prior to being permitted to visit with your loved one.

During Your Visit...

Each inmate may have 1 social visit per week. This might be restricted through disciplinary action, or by special status.

No more than 3 visitors may visit an inmate at any one time. Exceptions may be approved by the Superintendent or designee in advance.

Visits are 2 hours or less. A visit may be shorter to allow others to visit when it is busy.

Visiting Room Rules

- Physical contact between inmate and visitors over the age of 18 is not allowed.
- Visitors must be seated when the inmate arrives.
- Inmates will be brought in and seated in the designated inmate seating area across from the visitor(s).
- Inmates and visitors must keep their hands on the table at all times.
- No items may be passed between inmate and visitor.
- Inmates and visitors must keep their feet on the floor at all times.
- No disruptive behavior or loud voices is allowed. The visit will end if the behavior continues to be disruptive after an initial warning.

Visiting with the Whole Family

Bringing a child into a facility to visit can be a very meaningful way for the child to connect with an incarcerated parent and continue a relationship. To prevent any unexpected delays and make the visit a positive experience for the child, make sure you and the child know what to expect.

Before you take the child to see a parent, prepare the child for a correctional facility visit. If possible, make one or two visits alone before the child or children visit so you can tell them what the correctional facility looks like, where the visits take place, how long the visit will be, what the visitation rules are, etc.

Rules for When Children Visit Inmates

- Children must be under control at all times, and remain with the parent or guardian who brought them to the facility.
- Children 17 years old and younger may ask the visiting room officer if they can have a brief hug and kiss with their parent at the beginning and end of each visit.
- No child over the age of 5 may sit on the lap of an inmate.
- Inmates are not permitted to physically discipline children in the facility.
- Inmates are not allowed to change children's diapers.



- Children under the age of 11 may be allowed to visit on the same side of the table as the inmate.
- Inmates may play with the child or read to the child as long as there are no safety issues or disruptions to other visitors. If there is any suspicious behavior, the child will be moved to the outer side of the table with the visitor parent or guardian.
- If children are disruptive, staff will ask the parent to address the behavior. If the disruptive behavior continues, the visit will end.

What are the Visiting Schedules?

Visiting is allowed so that inmates may grow and keep healthy family and community ties. It is a privilege for inmates to have personal visits while in DOC facilities. Inmates know that they and their visitors must follow the visiting rules. Not following the visiting rules may result in warning, end of visit, suspension of visiting privileges, or permanent loss of visits.

Each facility has regularly scheduled visiting periods.

Any visitor arriving 30 minutes or less prior to the end of scheduled visiting hours will not be processed or allowed to visit at that time.

All visiting information is available on the [DOC website](#), which is continually updated.

Each facility has a different visiting schedule. Make sure that you plan your visits during visiting hours. If you need to schedule your visit ahead of time, make sure you have made the necessary arrangements.

What Other Types of Visits Can Inmates Have?

Special Visits

The Superintendent may provide opportunities for special visits when conditions require or the visitor is not on the approved visitor list. Approved special visits will be encouraged to happen during routine visiting hours.

Requests for visits during non-routine visiting hours will normally require 2 business days' notice.

Such visits may include:

- A person(s) awaiting approval under extraordinary or unusual circumstances;
- A person(s) who has traveled from out of state for a one-time visit;
- A person(s) who may assist the inmate in release planning;
- A family member(s) engaged in institutional programming and/or an event.

Outside Hospital Visits

Visits to inmates at hospitals by other than clergy and attorneys of record are not permitted unless:

- The inmate has been diagnosed as seriously or terminally ill.
- The period of hospitalization exceeds 1 week.
- The inmate is an expectant mother.

You must be on the inmate's approved visitor list, be immediate family, and have the prior approval of the facility to visit an inmate in the hospital.

Exception: For expectant mothers, the father of the expectant child may visit if on the approved visitor list.

Visitors must comply with hospital visiting rules.

Certified Religious Visits

Religious visits are during normal visiting hours unless otherwise arranged with the Superintendent and documented at least 1 day in advance.

The inmate may have the name of 1 certified religious visitor recorded on their Inmate Visitor List. The religious visitor is not counted in the maximum 10 visitors an inmate is allowed to have on their list, or counted toward the 1 visit a week. Religious visitors may visit 1 time a week.

The following procedures will be followed in order to place a certified religious visitor on an Inmate Visitor List:

- The inmate will instruct their potential religious visitor to send a copy of their ordination certificate, license, etc., to the Superintendent or designee.
- If the potential religious visitor does not have the above information, they may send a letter on official letterhead by the pastor, rabbi, imam or leader of the religious group stating their standing as a representative of that religious affiliation.
- The potential religious visitor must also send a letter stating that they are willing to be the inmate's religious visitor.

- After receiving and verifying the required paperwork from the religious visitor, the Superintendent will notify the Visiting Registration Center in writing of the name and address of the certified religious visitor for placement on the inmate visitor record.

The religious visitor may bring written religious materials into the visiting room for use during the visit only after they have been inspected for contraband. The certified religious visitor will leave the visit with all religious



material brought to the visit.

Attorney and Legal Visits

Attorneys or other legal representatives may visit the facility. To facilitate scheduling and ensure the availability of room, the DOC encourages attorneys to schedule their visit through the assigned Facility CSS.

Attorneys or their legal assistants do not need to be on the inmate visitor list. Legal assistants must have a letter of introduction signed by the attorney on the firm's letterhead. They must have a valid photo ID at the time of the visit.

All conversations between the inmate and their legal visitor may be watched by DOC staff, but not recorded in any manner. This is to preserve the confidentiality of the attorney-client relationship.

There is no limit on the number of legal visits an inmate may receive. Legal visits will be kept within the framework and times of normal business hours whenever possible. Prior approval from the Superintendent or designee should be received for legal visits expected to exceed normal business hours. Appropriate legal materials may be brought for use during the visit, but must be inspected by DOC staff and must leave the institution with the legal visitor, unless other arrangements have been made.

Medical Unit Visits

Inmates housed in medical housing unit may only have bedside visits with the approval of the Facility Superintendent.

The Facility Superintendent will determine the time and length of any visit based on the health service needs and DOC staffing requirements. Normal visitor approval and rules apply to facility hospital and medical unit visits.

Additional Information

Victimization, Sexual Safety and the Prison Rape Elimination Act

Inmates are not permitted to exchange funds or property. A request from the inmate to put funds on another inmate's account may indicate they are at risk of being victimized (physically or sexually) or they are attempting to purchase drugs. The DOC strongly encourages family members not to cooperate with such requests – this will make the situation worse, not better. Should a family member receive such a request they should notify the inmate's assigned Caseworker so the facility can check into safety concerns. Additionally, the DOC maintains a third-party victimization, sexual safety, and Prison Rape Elimination Act hotline number – (802) 241-0070 which you can call at any time with concerns.

Grievance Procedure

The DOC is committed to the use of dispute resolution practices that promote problem resolution at the earliest possible level and that draw upon restorative practices for dispute resolution. Ideally, most grievances can be resolved at the lowest and earliest possible level, because of good communication between the inmate and local departmental employees. However, because informal solutions to grievances are not always possible, the DOC has a responsibility to maintain formal procedures designed to resolve inmate complaints in a timely and consistent manner. If you are a friend or family member of an incarcerated person in Vermont, and there is an unresolved problem which needs addressing then you should encourage your incarcerated loved one to utilize the grievance procedure. By using the grievance procedure inmates submit a written document identifying their concerns, and are entitled to responses within specified timeframes. By using the formal grievance process inmates help ensure their grievances are addressed, documented, and responded to.

Inmates receive instruction about the inmate grievance system, including how to file a grievance and how to obtain grievance forms, as part of their intake and orientation. If there is an emergency which requires immediate action, then an inmate can file an emergency grievance. An emergency grievance involves a grievance of administrative decisions which allegedly present 1) a threat of death or injury; 2) a threat of disruption of facility operations; and 3) a need for prompt disposition because the time is lapsing when meaningful action or decision is possible.

Thanks to The Minnesota Department of Corrections for allowing use of text from their handbook for families and friends of those incarcerated, *Staying Connected and Staying Strong*.